

Søren Kierkegaard

“Kierkegaard” redirects here. For other uses, see Kierkegaard (disambiguation).

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (/ˈsɔːrənˈkiərkəɡɑːrd/ or /ˈkiərkəɡɑːr/; Danish: [ˈsø̝ːɐ̃n ˈki̥ɡəɡ̊ɑː] (ⓘ)) (5 May 1813 – 11 November 1855) was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher.^[1] He wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christendom, morality, ethics, psychology and philosophy of religion, displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony and parables. Much of his philosophical work deals with the issues of how one lives as a “single individual”, giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking, and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment.^[2] He was a fierce critic of idealist intellectuals and philosophers of his time, such as Swedenborg,^[3] Hegel, Goethe,^[4] Fichte, Schelling, Schlegel, and Hans Christian Andersen.

His theological work focuses on Christian ethics, the institution of the Church, the differences between purely objective proofs of Christianity, the infinite qualitative distinction between man and God, and the individual’s subjective relationship to the God-Man Jesus Christ,^[5] which came through faith.^{[6][7]} Much of his work deals with the art of Christian love. He was extremely critical of the practice of Christianity as a state religion, primarily that of the Church of Denmark. His psychological work explored the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices.^[8]

Kierkegaard’s early work was written under various pseudonyms which he used to present distinctive viewpoints and interact with each other in complex dialogue.^[9] He assigned pseudonyms to explore particular viewpoints in-depth, which required several books in some instances, while Kierkegaard, openly or under another pseudonym, critiqued that position. He wrote many *Upbuilding Discourses* under his own name and dedicated them to the “single individual” who might want to discover the meaning of his works. Notably, he wrote: “Science and scholarship want to teach that becoming objective is the way. Christianity teaches that the way is to become subjective, to become a subject.”^[10] While scientists can learn about the world by observation, Kierkegaard emphatically denied that observation could reveal the inner workings of the spiritual world.^[11]

Some of Kierkegaard’s key ideas include the concept of “*Truth as Subjectivity*”, the knight of faith, the recollection

and repetition dichotomy, angst, the infinite qualitative distinction, faith as a passion, and the three stages on life’s way. Kierkegaard’s writings were written in Danish and were initially limited to Scandinavia, but by the turn of the 20th century, his writings were translated into major European languages, such as French and German. By the mid-20th century, his thought exerted a substantial influence on philosophy,^[12] theology,^[13] and Western culture.^[14]

1 Early years (1813–1836)

Søren Kierkegaard was born to an affluent family in Copenhagen. His mother, Ane Sørensdatter Lund Kierkegaard, had served as a maid in the household before marrying his father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard. She was an unassuming figure: quiet, plain, and not formally educated but Henriette Lund, her granddaughter, wrote that she “wielded the sceptre with joy and protected [Søren and Peter] like a hen protecting her children”.^[15] His father was a “very stern man, to all appearances dry and prosaic, but under his ‘rustic cloak’ demeanor he concealed an active imagination which not even his great age could blunt.”^[16] He read the philosophy of Christian Wolff.^[17] Kierkegaard preferred the comedies of Ludvig Holberg,^[18] the writings of Georg Johann Hamann,^[19] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing,^[20] Edward Young^[21] and Plato, especially those referring to Socrates.

Copenhagen in the 1830s and 1840s had crooked streets where carriages rarely went. Kierkegaard loved to walk them. In 1848, Kierkegaard wrote, “I had real Christian satisfaction in the thought that, if there were no other, there was definitely one man in Copenhagen whom every poor person could freely accost and converse with on the street; that, if there were no other, there was one man who, whatever the society he most commonly frequented, did not shun contact with the poor, but greeted every maidservant he was acquainted with, every manservant, every common laborer.”^[22] Our Lady’s Church was at one end of the city, where Bishop Mynster preached the Gospel. At the other end was the Royal Theatre where Fru Heiberg performed.^[23]

Based on a speculative interpretation of anecdotes in Kierkegaard’s unpublished journals, especially a rough draft of a story called “The Great Earthquake”,^[24] some early Kierkegaard scholars argued that Michael believed he had earned God’s wrath and that none of his children would outlive him. He is said to have believed that his



When Michael (Mikael) Kierkegaard died on 9 August 1838 Søren had lost both his parents and all his brothers and sisters except for Peter who later became Bishop of Aalborg in the Danish State Lutheran Church.

personal sins, perhaps indiscretions such as cursing the name of God in his youth or impregnating Ane out of wedlock, necessitated this punishment. Though five of his seven children died before he did, both Kierkegaard and his brother Peter Christian Kierkegaard outlived him.^[25] Peter, who was seven years Kierkegaard's elder, later became bishop in Aalborg.^[25]

Kierkegaard came to hope that no one would retain their sins even though they have been forgiven. And by the same token that no one who truly believed in the forgiveness of sin would live their own life as an objection against the existence of forgiveness.^[26] He made the point that Cato committed suicide before Caesar had a chance to forgive him. This fear of not finding forgiveness is devastating.^[27] Edna H. Hong quoted Kierkegaard in her 1984 book, *Forgiveness is a Work As Well As a Grace*.

You Spirit of Holiness, you live in our unholiness. You Spirit of Wisdom, you live in our unwisdom. You Spirit of Truth, you live in our untruth. Oh, please stay there! You have every right to go looking for a more desirable address, but you do not do so. After all, it would be a futile search! You, who are creating and regenerating and making your own house, oh, keep on living here so that some day you may be pleased with the house you are making in my unworthy heart.^[28]

In 1830, Kierkegaard attended the School of Civic Virtue, Østre Borgerdyd Gymnasium, when the school was situated in Klarebodeme, where he studied Latin and history among other subjects. He went on to study theology at the University of Copenhagen. He had little interest in historical works, philosophy dissatisfied him, and he couldn't see "dedicating himself to Speculation".^[29] He said, "What I really need to do is to get clear about "what am I to do", not what I must know". He wanted

to "lead a completely human life and not merely one of knowledge."^[30] Kierkegaard didn't want to be a philosopher in the traditional or Hegelian sense^[31] and he didn't want to preach a Christianity that was an illusion.^[32] "But he had learned from his father that one can do what one wills, and his father's life had not discredited this theory."^[33]

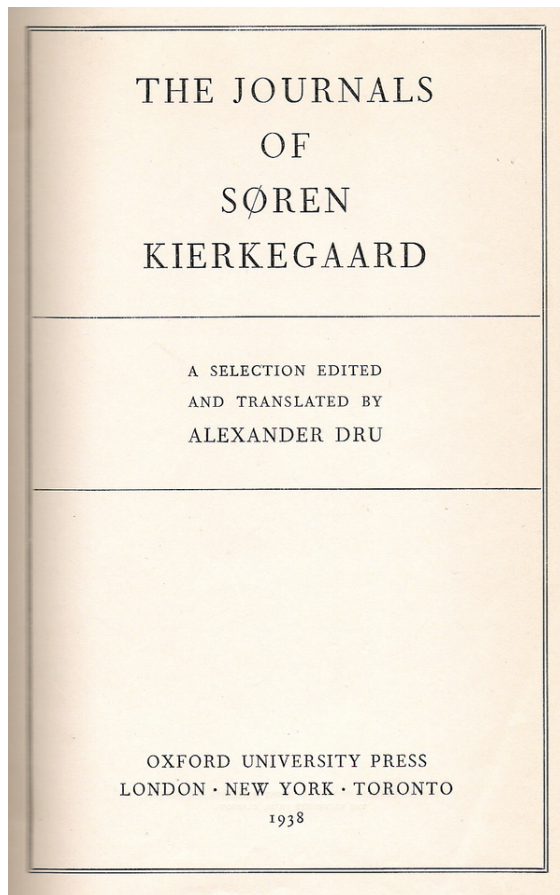
One of the first physical descriptions of Kierkegaard comes from an attendee, Hans Brøchner, at his brother Peter's wedding party in 1836: "I found [his appearance] almost comical. He was then twenty-three years old; he had something quite irregular in his entire form and had a strange coiffure. His hair rose almost six inches above his forehead into a tousled crest that gave him a strange, bewildered look."^[34] Another comes from Kierkegaard's niece, Henriette Lund (1829–1909), When Søren Kierkegaard was a little boy he "was of slender and delicate appearance, and ran about in a little coat of red-cabbage color. He used to be called 'fork' by his father, because of his tendency, developed quite early, toward satirical remarks. Although a serious, almost austere tone pervaded the Kierkegaard's house, I have the firm impression that there was a place for youthful vivacity too, even though of a more sedate and home-made kind than one is used to nowadays. The house was open for an 'old-fashioned hospitality'. " (1876)^[35]

Kierkegaard's mother "was a nice little woman with an even and happy disposition," according to a grandchild's description. She was never mentioned in Kierkegaard's works. Ane died on 31 July 1834, age 66, possibly from typhus.^[36] His father died on 8 August 1838, age 82. On 11 August, Kierkegaard wrote: "My father died on Wednesday (the 8th) at 2:00 a.m. I so deeply desired that he might have lived a few years more... Right now I feel there is only one person (E. Boesen) with whom I can really talk about him. He was a 'faithful friend.'"^[37] Troels Frederik Lund, his nephew, was instrumental in providing biographers with much information regarding Søren Kierkegaard.

1.1 Journals

According to Samuel Hugo Bergmann, "Kierkegaard's journals are one of the most important sources for an understanding of his philosophy".^[38] Kierkegaard wrote over 7,000 pages in his journals on events, musings, thoughts about his works and everyday remarks.^[39] The entire collection of Danish journals (*Journalen*) was edited and published in 13 volumes consisting of 25 separate bindings including indices. The first English edition of the journals was edited by Alexander Dru in 1938.^[40] The style is "literary and poetic [in] manner".^[41]

Kierkegaard wanted to have Regine, his fiancé (see below), as his confidant but considered it an impossibility for that to happen so he left it to "my reader, that single individual" to become his confidant. His question was



The cover of the first English edition of *The Journals*, edited by Alexander Dru in 1938

whether or not one can have a spiritual confidant. He wrote the following in his *Concluding Postscript*: “With regard to the essential truth, a direct relation between spirit and spirit is unthinkable. If such a relation is assumed, it actually means that the party has ceased to be spirit.”^[42]

Kierkegaard’s journals were the source of many aphorisms credited to the philosopher. The following passage, from 1 August 1835, is perhaps his most oft-quoted aphorism and a key quote for existentialist studies:

What I really need is to get clear about what I must do, not what I must know, except insofar as knowledge must precede every act. What matters is to find a purpose, to see what it really is that God wills that I shall do; the crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die.”^[43]

Although his journals clarify some aspects of his work and life, Kierkegaard took care not to reveal too much. Abrupt changes in thought, repetitive writing, and unusual turns of phrase are some among the many tactics he

used to throw readers off track. Consequently, there are many varying interpretations of his journals. Kierkegaard did not doubt the importance his journals would have in the future. In December 1849, he wrote: “Were I to die now the effect of my life would be exceptional; much of what I have simply jotted down carelessly in the Journals would become of great importance and have a great effect; for then people would have grown reconciled to me and would be able to grant me what was, and is, my right.”^[44]

1.2 Regine Olsen and graduation (1837–1841)

Main article: [Regine Olsen](#)

An important aspect of Kierkegaard’s life – generally



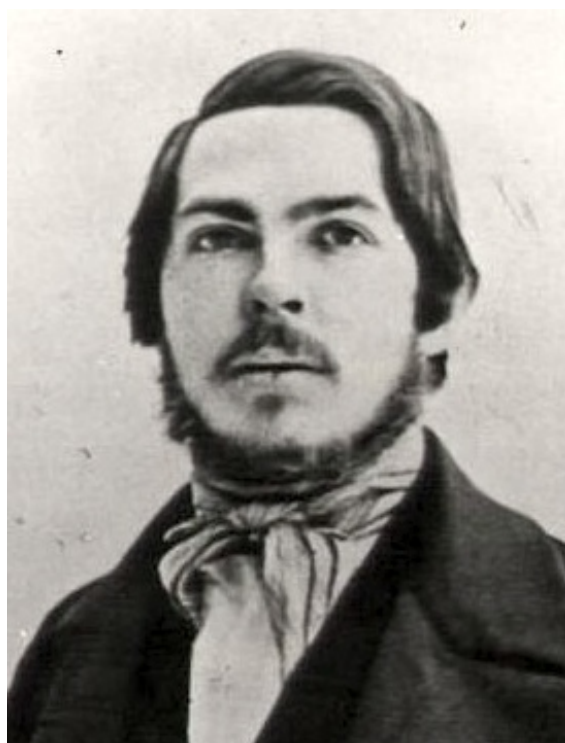
Regine Olsen, a muse for Kierkegaard’s writings

considered to have had a major influence on his work – was his broken engagement to [Regine Olsen](#) (1822–1904). Kierkegaard and Olsen met on 8 May 1837 and were instantly attracted to each other, but sometime around 11 August 1838 he had second thoughts. In his journals, Kierkegaard wrote about his love for her:

You, sovereign queen of my heart, Regina, hidden in the deepest secrecy of my breast, in the fullness of my life-idea, there where it is just as far to heaven as to hell—unknown divinity! O, can I really believe the poets when they say that the first time one sees the beloved object he thinks he has seen her long before, that love like all knowledge is recollection, that love

in the single individual also has its prophecies, its types, its myths, its Old Testament. Everywhere, in the face of every girl, I see features of your beauty... *Journals & Papers of Søren Kierkegaard*, 11 August 1838^[45]

On 8 September 1840, Kierkegaard formally proposed to Olsen. He soon felt disillusioned about his prospects. He broke off the engagement on 11 August 1841, though it is generally believed that the two were deeply in love. In his journals, Kierkegaard mentions his belief that his “melancholy” made him unsuitable for marriage, but his precise motive for ending the engagement remains unclear.^{[25][46][47]}



Friedrich Engels-1840

Kierkegaard then turned his attention to his examinations. On 13 May 1839, he wrote, “I have no alternative than to suppose that it is God’s will that I prepare for my examination and that it is more pleasing to him that I do this than actually coming to some clearer perception by immersing myself in one or another sort of research, for obedience is more precious to him than the fat of rams.”^[48] The death of his father and the death of Poul Møller also played a part in his decision.

On 29 September 1841, Kierkegaard wrote and defended his dissertation, *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*. The university panel considered it noteworthy and thoughtful, but too informal and witty for a serious academic thesis.^[49] The thesis dealt with irony and Schelling’s 1841 lectures, which Kierkegaard had attended with Mikhail Bakunin, Jacob Burckhardt, and Friedrich Engels; each had come away with a differ-

ent perspective.^[50] Kierkegaard graduated from university on 20 October 1841 with a *Magister Artium*. He was able to fund his education, his living, and several publications of his early works with his family’s inheritance of approximately 31,000 rigsdaler.^[40]

2 Authorship (1843–1846)

Kierkegaard published some of his works using pseudonyms and for others he signed his own name as author. Whether being published under pseudonym or not, Kierkegaard’s central writings on religion have included *Fear and Trembling* and *Either/Or*, the latter of which is considered to be his magnum opus. Pseudonyms were used often in the early 19th century as a means of representing viewpoints other than the author’s own; examples include the writers of the *Federalist Papers* and the *Anti-Federalist Papers*. Kierkegaard employed the same technique as a way to provide examples of indirect communication. Due to having writings under various pseudonyms with sometimes contradicting positions to other works of his own, Kierkegaard is sometimes criticized as being a writer that simply plays with viewpoints without entirely committing to just one. He has been described by those opposing his writings as indeterminate in his standpoint as a writer, though he himself has testified to all his work deriving from a service to Christianity.^[51] After *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, his university thesis, he had written his first book under the pseudonym “Johannes Climacus” (after John Climacus) between 1841–1842. *De omnibus dubitandum est* (Latin: “Everything must be doubted”) was not published until after his death.^[52]

Kierkegaard’s magnum opus *Either/Or* was published 20 February 1843; it was mostly written during Kierkegaard’s stay in Berlin, where he took notes on Schelling’s *Philosophy of Revelation*. *Either/Or* includes essays of literary and music criticism and a set of romantic-like-aphorisms, as part of his larger theme of examining the reflective and philosophical structure of faith.^{[53][54]} Edited by Victor Eremita, the book contained the papers of an unknown “A” and “B” which were discovered by Victor Eremita (the pseudonymous author) claimed to have found these papers in a secret drawer of his secretary.^[55] Eremita had a hard time putting the papers of “A” in order because they were not straightforward. “B”’s papers were arranged in an orderly fashion.^[56] Both these characters are trying to become religious individuals.^[57] Each approached the idea of first love from an esthetic and an ethical point of view. The book is basically an argument about faith and marriage with a short discourse at the end telling them they should stop arguing. Eremita thinks “B”, a judge, makes the most sense. Kierkegaard stressed the “how” of Christianity as well as the “how” of book reading in his works

rather than the “what”.^[58]

Three months after the publication of *Either/Or*, 16 May 1843, he published *Two Upbuilding Discourses, 1843* and continued to publish discourses along with his pseudonymous books. These discourses were published under Kierkegaard's own name and are available as *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* today. David F. Swenson first translated the works in the 1940s and titled them the *Edifying Discourses*; however, in 1990, Howard V. and Edna H. Hong translated the works again but called them the *Upbuilding Discourses*. The word “upbuilding” was more in line with Kierkegaard's thought after 1846, when he wrote Christian deliberations about works of love.^[59] An upbuilding discourse or edifying discourse isn't the same as a sermon because a sermon is preached to a congregation while a discourse can be carried on between several people or even with oneself. The discourse or conversation should be “upbuilding”, which means one would build up the other person, or oneself, rather than tear down in order to build up. Kierkegaard said: “Although this little book (which is called “discourses,” not sermons, because its author does not have authority to preach, “upbuilding discourses,” not discourses for upbuilding, because the speaker by no means claims to be a teacher) wishes to be only what it is, a superfluity, and desires only to remain in hiding”.^[60]

On 16 October 1843, Kierkegaard published three more books about love and faith and several more discourses. *Fear and Trembling*, published under the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio, was about Abraham wishing he did not have to sacrifice his son, Isaac, to show his love for God. Kierkegaard compared Abraham's situation with that of Agamemnon who saw it as his duty to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to show his love for the Greek state. Abraham couldn't understand how sacrificing Isaac would be a good gift while Agamemnon was certain that sacrificing Iphigenia would be a good gift to the Greek state. *Repetition* is about a Young Man (Søren Kierkegaard) who is suffering from anxiety and depression because he feels he has to sacrifice his love for a girl (Regine Olsen) to God. He tries to see if the new science of psychology can help him understand himself. Constantin Constantius, who is the pseudonymous author of that book, is the psychologist. At the same time, he published *Three Upbuilding Discourses, 1843* under his own name, which dealt specifically with how love can be used to hide things from yourself or others.^[61] These three books, all published on the same day, are an example of Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication.

Kierkegaard questioned whether an individual can know if something is a good gift from God or not and concludes by saying, “it does not depend, then, merely upon what one sees, but what one sees depends upon *how* one sees; all observation is not just a receiving, a discovering, but also a bringing forth, and insofar as it is that, how the observer himself is constituted is indeed decisive.”^[62] God's love is imparted indirectly just as our own some-

times is.^[63]

During 1844, he published two, three, and four more upbuilding discourses just as he did in 1843, but here he discussed how an individual might come to know God as theologians, philosophers and historians were all engaged in debating about the existence of God. This is direct communication and Kierkegaard thinks this might be useful for theologians, philosophers, and historians (associations) but not at all useful for the “single individual” that is interested in becoming a Christian. Kierkegaard always wrote for “that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader”^[64] The single individual must put what is understood to use or it will be lost. Reflection can take an individual only so far before the imagination begins to change the whole content of what was being thought about. Love is won by being exercised just as much as faith and patience are.

He also wrote several more pseudonymous books in 1844: *Philosophical Fragments*, *Prefaces* and *The Concept of Anxiety* and finished the year up with *Four Upbuilding Discourses, 1844*. He used indirect communication in the first book and direct communication in the rest of them. He doesn't believe the question about God's existence should be an opinion held by one group and differently by another no matter how many demonstrations are made. He says it's up to the single individual to make the fruit of the Holy Spirit real because love and joy are always just possibilities. Christendom wanted to define God's attributes once and for all but Kierkegaard was against this. His love for Regine was a disaster but it helped him because of his point of view.^[65]

Kierkegaard believed “each generation has its own task and need not trouble itself unduly by being everything to previous and succeeding generations”.^[66] In an earlier book he had said, “to a certain degree every generation and every individual begins his life from the beginning”,^[67] and in another, “no generation has learned to love from another, no generation is able to begin at any other point than the beginning”, “no generation learns the essentially human from a previous one.”^[68] He was against the Hegelian idea of mediation^[69] because it introduces a “third term”^[70] that comes between the single individual and the object of desire. Kierkegaard asked if logic ends in actuality, can a person logically prove God's existence? Logic says no. Then he turns from logic to ethics and finds that Hegelian philosophy is negative rather than positive.^[71] This “third term” isn't mediation, it's love that proves God's existence.^[72] This is how he put it in 1847:

Worldly worry always seeks to lead a human being into the small-minded unrest of comparisons, away from the lofty calmness of simple thoughts. To be clothed, then, means to be a human being-and therefore to be well clothed. Worldly worry is preoccupied with clothes and dissimilarity of clothes. Should not

the invitation to **learn from the lilies** be welcome to everyone just as the reminder is useful to him! Alas, those great, uplifting, simple thoughts, those first thoughts, are more and more forgotten, perhaps entirely forgotten in the weekday and worldly life of comparisons. The one human being compares himself with others, the one generation compares itself with the other, and thus the heaped up pile of comparisons overwhelms a person. As the ingenuity and busyness increase, there come to be more and more in each generation who slavishly work a whole lifetime far down in the low underground regions of comparisons. Indeed, just as miners never see the light of day, so these unhappy people never come to see the light: those uplifting, simple thoughts, those first thoughts about how glorious it is to be a human being. And up there in the higher regions of comparison, smiling vanity plays its false game and deceives the happy ones so that they receive no impression from those lofty, simple thoughts, those first thoughts.

- Søren Kierkegaard, (1847) *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, Hong 188–189

2.1 Hidden Inwardness

Kierkegaard believed God comes to each individual mysteriously.^{[73][74]} Kierkegaard published *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (first called *Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life*, in David F. Swenson's 1941 translation) under his own name on 29 April, and *Stages on Life's Way* edited by Hilarius Bookbinder, 30 April 1845. The *Stages* is a rewrite of *Either/Or* which Kierkegaard did not think had been adequately read by the public and in *Stages* he predicted "that two-thirds of the book's readers will quit before they are halfway through, out of boredom they will throw the book away."^[75] He knew he was writing books but had no idea who was reading them. His sales were meager and he had no publicist or editor. He was writing in the dark, so to speak.^[76]

He then went to Berlin for a short rest. Upon returning he published his *Discourses* of 1843–44 in one volume, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 29 May 1845 and finished the first part of his authorship with *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* which was a rewrite of *Philosophical Fragments* as well as an explanation of the first part of his authorship. In 1851 he further explained himself in his *Journal*. "What I have understood as the task of the authorship has been done. It is one idea, this continuity from *Either/Or* to *Anti-Climacus*, the idea of religiousness in reflection. The task has occupied me totally, for it has occupied me religiously; I have understood the completion of this authorship as my duty, as

a responsibility resting upon me." He advised his reader to read his books slowly and also to read them aloud since that might aid in understanding.^[77] Kierkegaard identified this **leap of faith** as the good resolution.^[78]

He was writing about the **inner being** in all of these books and his goal was to get the single individual away from all the **speculation** that was going on about God and Christ. Speculation creates quantities of ways to find God and his Goods but finding faith in Christ and putting the understanding to use stops all speculation because then one begins to actually exist as a Christian or in an ethical/religious way. In Kierkegaard's view the Church should not try to prove Christianity or even defend it. It should help the single individual to make a **leap of faith**.^[79]

When we take a religious person, the knight of hidden inwardness, and place him in the existence-medium, a contradiction will appear as he relates himself to the world around him, and he himself must become aware of this. The contradiction does not consist in his being different from everyone else but the contradiction is that he, with all his inwardness hidden within him, with this pregnancy of suffering and benediction in his inner being, looks just like all the others—and inwardness is indeed hidden simply by his looking exactly like others. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Hong p. 499

Kierkegaard wrote his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* in 1846 and here he tried to explain the intent of the first part of his authorship.

^{[80][81]} He said, "Christianity will not be content to be an evolution within the total category of human nature; an engagement such as that is too little to offer to a god. Neither does it even want to be the paradox for the believer, and then surreptitiously, little by little, provide him with understanding, because the martyrdom of faith (to crucify one's understanding) is not a martyrdom of the moment, but the martyrdom of continuance."^{[82][83]} The second part of his authorship was summed up in *Practice in Christianity*:

The deification of the established order is the secularization of everything. With regard to secular matters, the established order may be entirely right: one should join the established order, be satisfied with that relativity, etc. But ultimately the relationship with God is also secularized; we want it to coincide with a certain relativity, do not want it to be something essentially different from our positions in life – rather than that it shall be the absolute for every individual human being and this, the individual person's God-relationship, shall

be precisely what keeps every established order in suspense, and that God, at any moment he chooses, if he merely presses upon an individual in his relationship with God, promptly has a witness, an informer, a spy, or whatever you want to call it, one who in unconditional obedience and with unconditional obedience, by being persecuted, by suffering, by dying, keeps the established order in suspense. When an individual appeals to his relationship with God over against the established order that has deified itself, it does indeed seem as if he were making himself more than human. But he is not doing that at all, for he admits, after all, that every human being, unconditionally every person, has and is to have for his part the same relationship with God. Just as little as someone who says that he is in love thereby denies that someone else is in love, so even less does such an individual deny that the others, but as individuals, have a relationship with God. But the established order will not put up with consisting of something as loose as a collection of millions of individuals, each of whom has his relationship with God.

- Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity* (1850) p. 91 Hong

Early Kierkegaardian scholars, such as Theodor W. Adorno and Thomas Henry Croxall, argue that the entire authorship should be treated as Kierkegaard's own personal and religious views.^[84] This view leads to confusions and contradictions which make Kierkegaard appear philosophically incoherent.^[85] Later scholars, such as the post-structuralists, interpreted Kierkegaard's work by attributing the pseudonymous texts to their respective authors. Postmodern Christians present a different interpretation of Kierkegaard's works.^[86] Kierkegaard used the category of "The Individual"^[87] to stop^[88] the endless *Either/Or*.^[89]

2.2 Pseudonyms

Kierkegaard's most important pseudonyms,^[90] in chronological order, were:

- Victor Eremita, editor of *Either/Or*
- A, writer of many articles in *Either/Or*
- Judge William, author of rebuttals to A in *Either/Or*
- Johannes de silentio, author of *Fear and Trembling*
- Constantin Constantius, author of the first half of *Repetition*
- Young Man, author of the second half of *Repetition*

- Vigilius Haufniensis, author of *The Concept of Anxiety*
- Nicolaus Notabene, author of *Prefaces*
- Hilarius Bookbinder, editor of *Stages on Life's Way*
- Johannes Climacus, author of *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*
- Inter et Inter, author of *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*
- H.H., author of *Two Minor Ethical-Religious Essays*
- Anti-Climacus, author of *The Sickness Unto Death* and *Practice in Christianity*

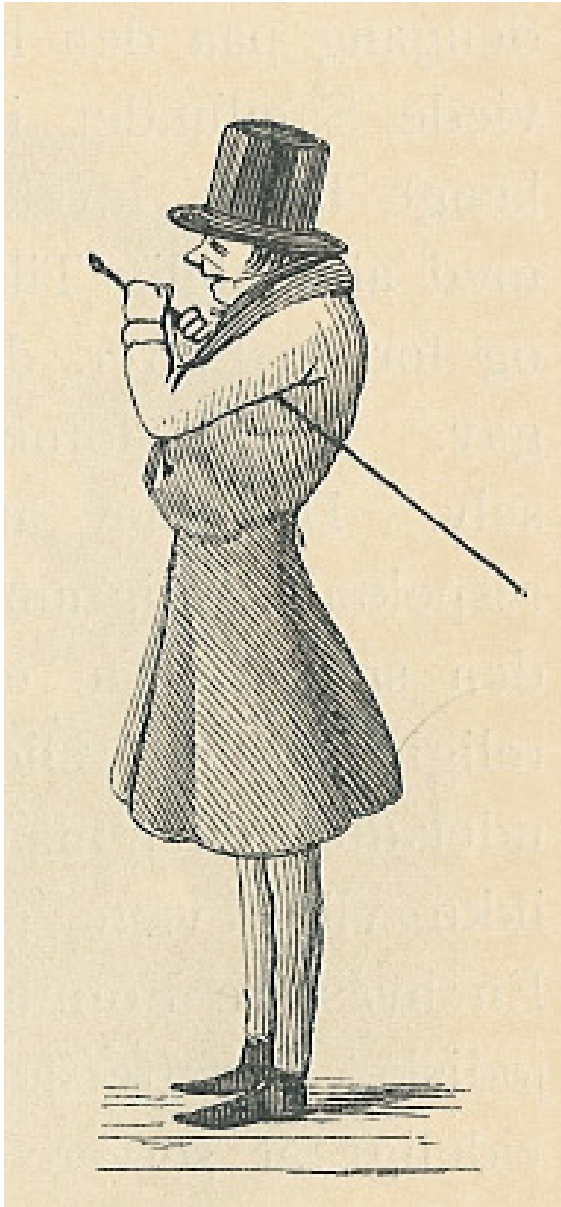
All of these writings analyze the concept of faith, on the supposition that if people are confused about faith, as Kierkegaard thought the inhabitants of Christendom were, they will not be in a position to develop the virtue. Faith is a matter of reflection in the sense that one cannot have the virtue unless one has the concept of virtue - or at any rate the concepts that govern faith's understanding of self, world, and God.^[91]

2.3 The Corsair Affair

On 22 December 1845, Peder Ludvig Møller, who studied at the University of Copenhagen at the same time as Kierkegaard, published an article indirectly criticizing *Stages on Life's Way*. The article complimented Kierkegaard for his wit and intellect, but questioned whether he would ever be able to master his talent and write coherent, complete works. Møller was also a contributor to and editor of *The Corsair*, a Danish satirical paper that lampooned everyone of notable standing. Kierkegaard published a sarcastic response, charging that Møller's article was merely an attempt to impress Copenhagen's literary elite.

Kierkegaard wrote two small pieces in response to Møller, *The Activity of a Traveling Esthetician* and *Dialectical Result of a Literary Police Action*. The former focused on insulting Møller's integrity while the latter was a directed assault on *The Corsair*, in which Kierkegaard, after criticizing the journalistic quality and reputation of the paper, openly asked *The Corsair* to satirize him.^[92]

Kierkegaard's response earned him the ire of the paper and its second editor, also an intellectual of Kierkegaard's own age, Meir Aron Goldschmidt.^[93] Over the next few months, *The Corsair* took Kierkegaard up on his offer to "be abused", and unleashed a series of attacks making fun of Kierkegaard's appearance, voice and habits. For months, Kierkegaard perceived himself to be the victim of harassment on the streets of Denmark. In a journal entry dated 9 March 1846, Kierkegaard made a long, detailed explanation of his attack on Møller and *The Corsair*, and also explained that this attack made him rethink his strategy of indirect communication.^[94]



A caricature of Kierkegaard published in *The Corsair*, a satirical journal

On 27 February 1846, Kierkegaard published *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, under his first pseudonym, Johannes Climacus. On 30 March 1846 he published *Two Ages: A Literary Review*, under his own name. A critique of the novel *Two Ages* (in some translations *Two Generations*) written by Thomasine Christine Gyllembourg-Ehrensvärd, Kierkegaard made several insightful observations on what he considered the nature of modernity and its passionless attitude towards life. Kierkegaard writes that “the present age is essentially a sensible age, devoid of passion [...] The trend today is in the direction of mathematical equality, so that in all classes about so and so many uniformly make one individual”.^[95] In this, Kierkegaard attacked the conformity and assimilation of individuals into “the crowd”^[96] which became the standard for truth,

since it was the numerical. How can one love the neighbor if the neighbor is always regarded as the wealthy or the poor or the lame?

A useless and perhaps futile conflict goes on often enough in the world, when the poor person says to the wealthy person, “Sure, it’s easy for you—you are free from worry about making a living.” Would to God that the poor person would really understand how the Gospel is much more kindly disposed to him, is treating him equally and more lovingly. Truly, the Gospel does not let itself be deceived into taking sides with anyone against someone else, with someone who is wealthy against someone who is poor, or with someone who is poor against someone who is wealthy. Among individuals in the world, the conflict of disconnected comparison is frequently carried on about dependence and independence, about the happiness of being independent and the difficulty of being dependent. And yet, yet human language has not ever, and thought has not ever, invented a more beautiful symbol of independence than the poor bird of the air. And yet, yet no speech can be more curious than to say that it must be very bad and very heavy to be-light as the bird! To be dependent on one’s treasure—that is dependence and hard and heavy slavery; to be dependent on God, completely dependent—that is independence. Søren Kierkegaard, 1847 *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, Hong p. 180-181

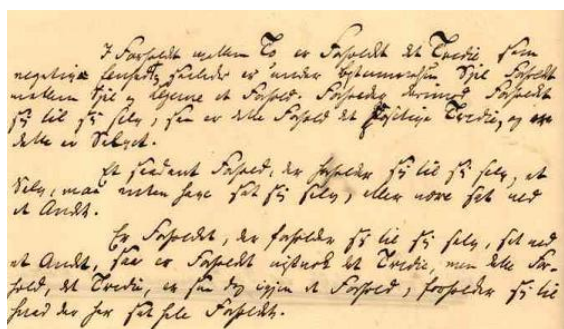
As part of his analysis of the “crowd”, Kierkegaard accused newspapers of decay and decadence. Kierkegaard stated Christendom had “lost its way” by recognizing “the crowd,” as the many who are moved by newspaper stories, as the court of last resort in relation to “the truth.” Truth comes to a single individual, not all people at one and the same time. Just as truth comes to one individual at a time so does love. One doesn’t love the crowd but does love their neighbor, who is a single individual. He says, “never have I read in the Holy Scriptures this command: You shall love the crowd; even less: You shall, ethico-religiously, recognize in the crowd the court of last resort in relation to ‘the truth.’”^{[97][98]}

3 Authorship (1847–1855)

Kierkegaard began to write again in 1847. His first work in this period was *Edifying Discourses in Diverse Spirits*,^[46] which included *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*, and *Works of Love*, both authored under his own name. There had been much discussion in Denmark about the pseudonymous authors until the publication of *Concluding Unscientific Discourses* where he openly admitted to

be the author of the books because people began wondering if he was, in fact, a Christian or not.^{[99][100]} Several Journal entries from that year shed some light on what Kierkegaard hoped to achieve.^{[101][102][103][104]} He began to openly mention Christ in his *Part III, The Gospel of Sufferings*, in his work *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* where he now moves from “upbuilding (Edifying) discourses” to “Christian discourses”, however, he still maintains that these are not “sermons”.^[105]

In 1848 he published *Christian Discourses* under his own name and *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* under the pseudonym Inter et Inter. Kierkegaard also developed *The Point of View of My Work as an Author*, his autobiographical explanation for his prolific use of pseudonyms. The book was finished in 1848, but not published until after his death.



Kierkegaard's manuscript of *The Sickness Unto Death*^[106]

The Second edition of *Either/Or* and *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air* were both published early in 1849. Kierkegaard's “profound religious experience of Holy Week 1848” as his turn from “indirect communication” to “direct communication” regarding Christianity.^[107] Later that year he published *The Sickness Unto Death*, under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus; four months later he wrote *Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* under his own name. Another work by Anti-Climacus, *Practice in Christianity*, was published in 1850, but edited by Kierkegaard. This work was called *Training in Christianity* when Walter Lowrie translated it in 1941.

In 1851, Kierkegaard began openly presenting his case for Christianity to the “Single Individual”. In *Practice in Christianity*, his last pseudonymous work, he stated, “In this book, originating in the year 1848, the requirement for being a Christian is forced up by the pseudonymous authors to a supreme ideality.”^[108] He now pointedly referred to the single individual in his next three publications; *For Self-Examination*, *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*, and in 1852 *Judge for Yourself!*.^{[109][110]}

Kierkegaard began his 1843 book *Either/Or* with a question: “Are passions, then, the pagans of the soul? Reason alone baptized?”^[111] He didn't want to devote himself to Thought or Speculation like Hegel did. Faith, hope, love, peace, patience, joy, self-control, vanity, kindness, hu-

mility, courage, cowardliness, pride, deceit, and selfishness. These are the inner passions that Thought knows little about. Hegel begins the process of education with Thought but Kierkegaard thinks we could begin with passion, or a balance between the two, a balance between Goethe and Hegel.^[112] He was against endless reflection with no passion involved. But at the same time he did not want to draw more attention to the external display of passion but the internal (hidden) passion of the single individual. Kierkegaard clarified this intention in his *Journals*.^[77]

Hegel put Reason first and Schelling put Nature first but Kierkegaard put the human being first and the choice first in his writings. He makes an argument against Nature here and points out that most single individuals begin life as spectators of the visible world and work toward knowledge of the invisible world.

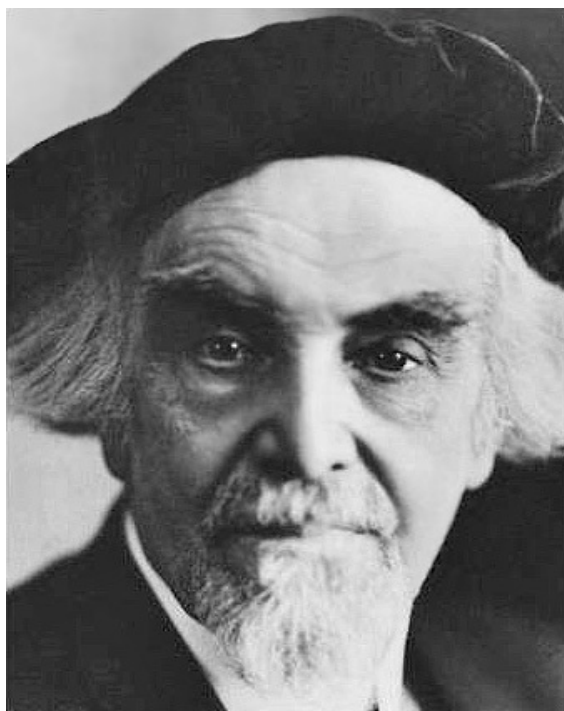
Is it a perfection on the part on the part of the bird that in hard times it sits and dies of hunger and knows of nothing at all to do, that, dazed, it lets itself fall to the ground and dies? Usually we do not talk this way. When a sailor lies down in the boat and lets matters take their course in the storm and knows nothing to do, we do not speak of his perfection. But when a doughty sailor knows how to steer, when he works against the storm with ingenuity, with strength, and with perseverance, when he works himself out of the danger, we admire him.

Seek first God's kingdom

-"which is within you." The flower does not seek anything; if the flower is to obtain anything, that anything must come to it; the flower waits, and even this it does without longing. But the person whom the visible did not deceive by anesthetization, the person whom temporality did not lull to sleep with monotonous uniformity, the person whom the temporality did not spellbind with delusion-that person the world does not satisfy; it only helps him, by painfully keeping him awake and expectant, to seek, to seek the eternal, God's kingdom, which is within a human being. A flower does not know such an invisible inner glory; what it has it is obliged to betray immediately; the bud quickly breaks the silence, betrays the glory, which in fact is soon gone. Seek first God's kingdom. This is the sequence, but it is also the sequence of inversion, because that which first offers itself to a person is everything that is visible and corruptible, which tempts and draws

him, yes, will entrap him in such a way that he begins last, or perhaps never, to seek God's kingdom. Søren Kierkegaard, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, 1847, Hong p. 198, 209

Nikolai Berdyaev makes an argument against reason in his 1945 book *Divine and the Human*. He wrote:



Nikolai Berdyaev

At first sight nothing could be more contradictory than Luther and Hegel. The former cursed reason, as a devil; the second made a god of reason. To the former everything is due to grace and this is certainly not favorable to metaphysical knowledge. But if one looks at the matter from a deeper point of view, it is possible to understand why his repudiation of reason was turned into a bold affirmation of reason. Luther was not a philosopher; his was a prophetic nature and he could not reflect philosophically upon his malediction upon reason, nor did he desire to do so. But the reason of Luther is entirely different from the reason of Hegel. Luther's reason is human while Hegel's reason is divine, as is the reason of Fichte and all the idealists of the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hegel's reason, which is of the greatest interest in this connection, is not the reason of Luther but the grace of Luther. With Hegel it is not the human reason which apprehends, but the divine reason, and with him everything issues from grace. The act of knowing, a religious act, is accomplished not by the

individual man but by the universal spirit. In the same way the ego in Fichte is not individual and not human, it is the divine, the universal ego. In German metaphysics of the beginning of the nineteenth century everything is on a razor edge and may be toppled over on to one or other of opposite sides. The philosophy of Hegel, which was its crowning manifestation, may be interpreted either as the final engulfing of the divine by the human and as an expression of the pride of man, or as the final engulfing of the human by the divine and as the denial of human personality. Both interpretations of Hegel are possible. The revolt of Dostoyevsky and Kierkegaard on behalf of the individual man was a revolt against Hegel, against his universal spirit, against the tyrannical domination of the universal over the individual. *Divine and the Human*, by Nicolai Berdyaev 1945 p. 30^[113]

3.1 Attack upon the State Church and death



Kierkegaard mounted an attack on Christian institutions in his final years. He felt the established state church was detrimental to individuals.

Kierkegaard's final years were taken up with a sustained, outright attack on the **Church of Denmark** by means of newspaper articles published in *The Fatherland* (*Fædrelandet*) and a series of self-published pamphlets called *The Moment* (*Øjeblikket*), also translated as "The Instant". These pamphlets are now included in Kierkegaard's *Attack Upon Christendom*^[114] *The Instant*, was translated into German as well as other European languages in 1861 and again in 1896.^[115]

Kierkegaard first moved to action after Professor (soon bishop) **Hans Lassen Martensen** gave a speech in church in which he called the recently deceased Bishop **Jacob Peter Mynster** a "truth-witness, one of the authentic truth-witnesses."^[6] Kierkegaard explained, in his first article, that Mynster's death permitted him—at last—to be frank about his opinions. He later wrote that all his former out-

put had been “preparations” for this attack, postponed for years waiting for two preconditions: 1) both his father and bishop Mynster should be dead before the attack and 2) he should himself have acquired a name as a famous theologic writer.^[116] Kierkegaard’s father had been Mynster’s close friend, but Søren had long come to see that Mynster’s conception of Christianity was mistaken, demanding too little of its adherents. Kierkegaard strongly objected to the portrayal of Mynster as a ‘truth-witness’.

Before the tenth issue of his periodical *The Moment* could be published, Kierkegaard collapsed on the street. He stayed in the hospital for over a month and refused communion. At that time he regarded pastors as mere political officials, a niche in society who was clearly not representative of the divine. He said to Emil Boesen, a friend since childhood who kept a record of his conversations with Kierkegaard, that his life had been one of immense suffering, which may have seemed like vanity to others, but he did not think it so.^{[146][117]}



Søren Kierkegaard's grave in Assistens Kirkegård

Kierkegaard died in **Frederik's Hospital** after over a month, possibly from complications from a fall he had taken from a tree in his youth. He was interred in the **Assistens Kirkegård** in the **Nørrebro** section of Copenhagen. At Kierkegaard's funeral, his nephew Henrik Lund caused a disturbance by protesting Kierkegaard's burial by the official church. Lund maintained that Kierkegaard would never have approved, had he been alive, as he had broken from and denounced the institution. Lund was later fined for his disruption of a funeral.^[25]

Kierkegaard's pamphlets and polemical books, including *The Moment*, criticized several aspects of church formalities and politics.^[118] According to Kierkegaard, the idea of congregations keeps individuals as children since Christians are disinclined from taking the initiative to take responsibility for their own relation to God. He stressed that “Christianity is the individual, here, the single individual.”^[119] Furthermore, since the Church was controlled by the State, Kierkegaard believed the State's bureaucratic mission was to increase membership and

oversee the welfare of its members. More members would mean more power for the clergymen: a corrupt ideal.^[120] This mission would seem at odds with Christianity's true doctrine, which, to Kierkegaard, is to stress the importance of the individual, not the whole.^[40] Thus, the state-church political structure is offensive and detrimental to individuals, since anyone can become “Christian” without knowing what it means to be Christian. It is also detrimental to the religion itself since it reduces Christianity to a mere fashionable tradition adhered to by unbelieving “believers”, a “herd mentality” of the population, so to speak.^[121] Kierkegaard always stressed the importance of the conscience and the use of it.^[122]

4 Reception

Main article: **Influence and reception of Søren Kierkegaard**

4.1 19th century reception

In September 1850, the *Western Literary Messenger* wrote: “While Martensen with his wealth of genius casts from his central position light upon every sphere of existence, upon all the **phenomena** of life, Søren Kierkegaard stands like another **Simon Stylites**, upon his solitary column, with his eye unchangeably fixed upon one point.”^[123] In 1855, the Danish National Church published his obituary. Kierkegaard did have an impact there judging from the following quote from their article: “The fatal fruits which Dr. Kierkegaard show to arise from the union of Church and State, have strengthened the scruples of many of the believing laity, who now feel that they can remain no longer in the Church, because thereby they are in communion with unbelievers, for there is no ecclesiastical discipline.”^{[123][124]}

Changes did occur in the administration of the Church and these changes were linked to Kierkegaard's writings. The Church noted that dissent was “something foreign to the national mind.” On 5 April 1855 the Church enacted new policies: “every member of a congregation is free to attend the ministry of any clergyman, and is not, as formerly, bound to the one whose parishioner he is”. In March 1857, compulsory infant **baptism** was abolished. Debates sprang up over the King's position as the head of the Church and over whether to adopt a constitution. **Grundtvig** objected to having any written rules. Immediately following this announcement the “agitation occasioned by Kierkegaard” was mentioned. Kierkegaard was accused of **Weigelianism** and **Darbyism**, but the article continued to say, “One great truth has been made prominent, viz (namely): That there exists a worldly-minded clergy; that many things in the Church are rotten; that all need daily repentance; that one must never be con-



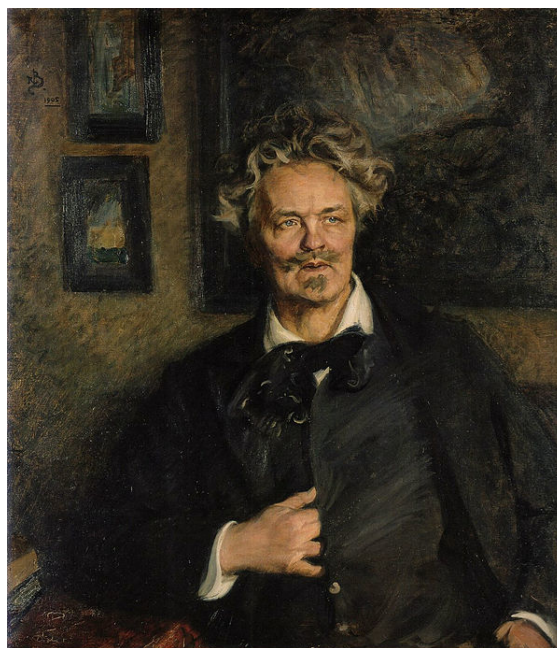
Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872)

tented with the existing state of either the Church or her pastors.”^{[123][125]}



Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–1884)

Hans Martensen wrote a monograph about Kierkegaard in 1856, a year after his death^[126] (untranslated) and mentioned him extensively in *Christian Ethics*, published in 1871.^[127] “Kierkegaard’s assertion is therefore perfectly justifiable, that with the category of “the individual” the cause of Christianity must stand and fall; that, without this category, **Pantheism** had conquered unconditionally. From this, at a glance, it may be seen that Kierkegaard ought to have made common cause with those philosophic and theological writers who specially desired to promote the principle of **Personality** as opposed to Pantheism. This is, however, far from the case. For those views which upheld the category of existence and personality, in opposition to this abstract idealism, did not do this in the sense of an either—or, but in that of a both—and. They strove to establish the unity of existence and idea, which may be specially seen from the fact that they desired system and totality. Martensen accused Kierkegaard and **Alexandre Vinet** of not giving society its due. He said both of them put the individual above society, and in so doing, above the Church.”^{[123][128]} Another early critic was **Magnús Eiríksson** who criticized Martensen and wanted Kierkegaard as his ally in his fight against speculative theology.



August Strindberg (1849–1912) from Sweden

“**August Strindberg** was influenced by the Danish individualistic philosopher Kierkegaard while a student at **Uppsala University** (1867–1870) and according to Edwin Bjorkman credited him as well as **Henry Thomas Buckle** and **Eduard von Hartmann** with shaping his artistic form until he was strong enough to stand wholly on his own feet.”^[129] The dramatist **Henrik Ibsen** is said to have become interested in Kierkegaard.

Several of Kierkegaard’s works were translated into German from 1861 onward, including excerpts from *Prac-*

tice in Christianity (1872), from *Fear and Trembling* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1874), *Four Upbuilding Discourses* and *Christian Discourses* (1875), and *The Lillis of the Field and the Birds of the Air* (1876) according to *Kierkegaard's International Reception: Northern and Western Europe: Toma I*, by John Stewart, see p. 388ff^[130]

Otto Pfleiderer in *The Philosophy of Religion: On the Basis of Its History* (1887), claimed that Kierkegaard presented an anti-rational view of Christianity. He went on to assert that the ethical side of a human being has to disappear completely in his one-sided view of faith as the highest good. He wrote, “Kierkegaard can only find true Christianity in entire renunciation of the world, in the following of Christ in lowliness and suffering especially when met by hatred and persecution on the part of the world. Hence his passionate polemic against ecclesiastical Christianity, which he says has fallen away from Christ by coming to a peaceful understanding with the world and conforming itself to the world’s life. True Christianity, on the contrary, is constant polemical pathos, a battle against reason, nature, and the world; its commandment is enmity with the world; its way of life is the death of the naturally human.”^{[123][131]}

An article from an 1889 dictionary of religion revealed a good idea of how Kierkegaard was regarded at that time, stating: “Having never left his native city more than a few days at a time, excepting once, when he went to Germany to study Schelling’s philosophy. He was the most original thinker and theological philosopher the North ever produced. His fame has been steadily growing since his death, and he bids fair to become the leading religious-philosophical light of Germany, not only his theological, but also his aesthetic works have of late become the subject of universal study in Europe.”^{[123][132]}

4.2 Early 20th century reception

The first academic to draw attention to Kierkegaard was fellow Dane Georg Brandes, who published in German as well as Danish. Brandes gave the first formal lectures on Kierkegaard in Copenhagen and helped bring him to the attention of the European intellectual community.^[133] Brandes published the first book on Kierkegaard’s philosophy and life, *Søren Kierkegaard, ein literarisches Charakterbild. Autorisierte deutsche Ausg* (1879)^[134] and compared him to Hegel and Tycho Brahe in *Reminiscences of my Childhood and Youth*^[135] (1906). Brandes also discussed the *Corsair Affair* in the same book.^[136] Brandes opposed Kierkegaard’s ideas in the 1911 edition of the *Britannica*.^{[123][137][138]} Brandes compared Kierkegaard to Nietzsche as well.^[139] Brandes also mentioned Kierkegaard extensively in volume 2 of his 6 volume work, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*.^{[123][140]}

During the 1890s, Japanese philosophers began dis-

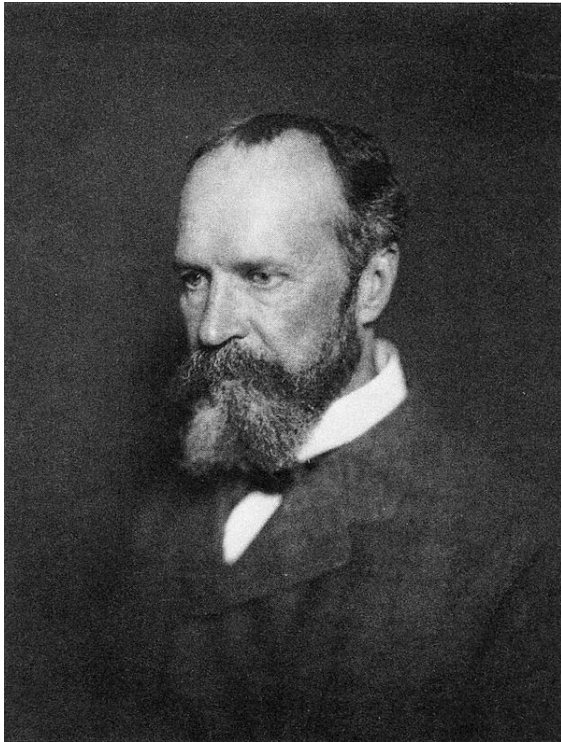


1879 German edition of Brandes’ biography about Søren Kierkegaard

seminating the works of Kierkegaard, from the Danish thinkers.^[141] Tetsuro Watsuji was one of the first philosophers outside of Scandinavia to write an introduction on his philosophy, in 1915.

Harald Høffding wrote an article about him in *A brief history of modern philosophy* (1900).^[123] Høffding mentioned Kierkegaard in *Philosophy of Religion* 1906, and the American Journal of Theology^[142] (1908) printed an article about *Høffding’s Philosophy of Religion*. Then Høffding repented of his previous convictions in *The problems of philosophy* (1913).^[123] Høffding was also a friend of the American philosopher William James, and although James had not read Kierkegaard’s works, as they were not yet translated into English, he attended the lectures about Kierkegaard by Høffding and agreed with much of those lectures. James’ favorite quote from Kierkegaard came from Høffding: “We live forwards but we understand backwards”. William James wrote:

“We live forward, we understand backward, said a Danish writer; and to understand life by concepts is to arrest its movement, cutting it up into bits as if with scissors, and, immobilizing these in our logical herbarium where, comparing them as dried specimens, we can ascertain which of them statically includes or excludes which other. This treatment sup-



William James (1890s)

poses life to have already accomplished itself, for the concepts, being so many views taken after the fact, are retrospective and post mortem. Nevertheless we can draw conclusions from them and project them into the future. We cannot learn from them how life made itself go, or how it will make itself go; but, on the supposition that its ways of making itself go are unchanging, we can calculate what positions of imagined arrest it will exhibit hereafter under given conditions." William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, 1909, p. 244^[143]

Kierkegaard wrote of moving forward past the irresolute good intention:

The yes of the promise is sleep-inducing, but the no, spoken and therefore audible to oneself, is awakening, and repentance is usually not far away. The one who says, "I will, sir," is at the same moment pleased with himself; the one who says no becomes almost afraid of himself. But this difference is very significant in the first moment and very decisive in the next moment; yet if the first moment is the judgment of the momentary, the second moment is the judgment of eternity. This is precisely why the world is so inclined to promises, inasmuch as the world is the momentary, and at the moment a promise looks very good. This is why eternity is suspicious

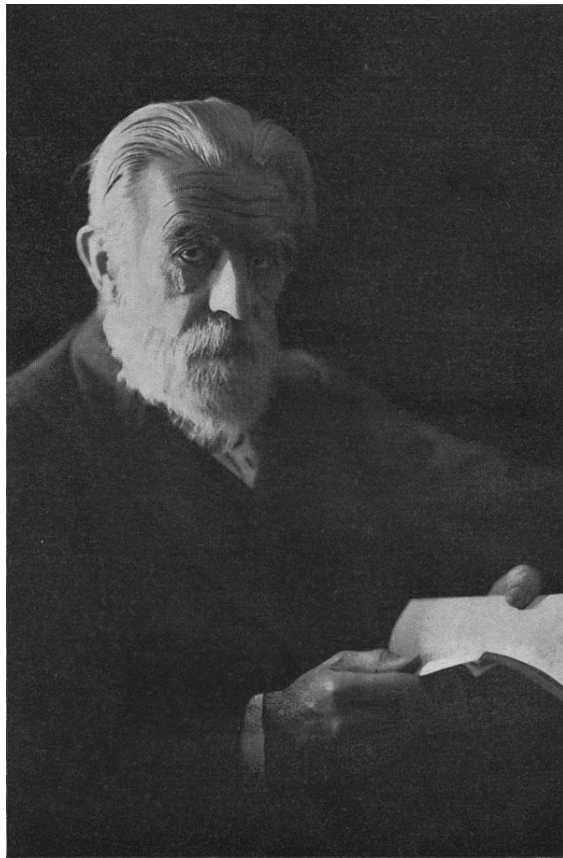
of promises, just as it is suspicious of everything momentary. And so it is also with the one who, rich in good intentions and quick to promise, moves backward further and further away from the good. By means of the intention and the promise, he is facing in the direction of the good, is turned toward the good but is moving backward further and further away from it. With every renewed intention and promise it looks as if he took a step forward, and yet he is not merely standing still, but he is actually taking a step backward. The intention taken in vain, the unfulfilled promise, leaves despondency, dejection, that in turn perhaps soon blazes up into an even more vehement intention, which leaves only greater listlessness. Just as the alcoholic continually needs a stronger and stronger stimulant in order to become intoxicated, likewise the one who has become addicted to promises and good intentions continually needs more and more stimulation in order to go backward. Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Hong p. 93-94 (1850)

One thing James did have in common with Kierkegaard was respect for the single individual, and their respective comments may be compared in direct sequence as follows: "A crowd is indeed made up of single individuals; it must therefore be in everyone's power to become what he is, a single individual; no one is prevented from being a single individual, no one, unless he prevents himself by becoming many. To become a crowd, to gather a crowd around oneself, is on the contrary to distinguish life from life; even the most well-meaning one who talks about that, can easily offend a single individual."^[144] In his book *A Pluralistic Universe*, James stated that, "Individuality outruns all classification, yet we insist on classifying every one we meet under some general label. As these heads usually suggest prejudicial associations to some hearer or other, the life of philosophy largely consists of resentments at the classing, and complaints of being misunderstood. But there are signs of clearing up for which both Oxford and Harvard are partly to be thanked."^{[145][146]}

The Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics had an article about Kierkegaard in 1908. The article began:

"The life of Søren Kierkegaard has but few points of contact with the external world; but there were, in particular, three occurrences—a broken engagement, an attack by a comic paper, and the use of a word by H.L. Martensen—which must be referred to as having wrought with extraordinary effect upon his peculiarly sensitive and high-strung nature. The intensity of his inner life, again—which finds expression in his published works, and even more directly in his notebooks and diaries (also published)—cannot be properly

understood without some reference to his father.”^{[123][147]}



Friedrich von Hügel 1852–1925

Friedrich von Hügel wrote about Kierkegaard in his 1913 book, *Eternal life: a study of its implications and applications*, where he said: “Kierkegaard, the deep, melancholy, strenuous, utterly uncompromising Danish religionist, is a spiritual brother of the great Frenchman, Blaise Pascal, and of the striking English Tractarian, Hurrell Froude, who died young and still full of crudity, yet left an abiding mark upon all who knew him well.”^{[148][149]}

Theodor Haecker wrote an essay titled, *Kierkegaard and the Philosophy of Inwardness* in 1913 and David F. Swenson wrote a biography of Søren Kierkegaard in 1920.^[123] Lee M. Hollander translated parts of *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Stages on Life's Way*, and *Preparations for the Christian Life* (Practice in Christianity) into English in 1923,^[150] with little impact. Swenson wrote about Kierkegaard's idea of “armed neutrality”^[151] in 1918 and a lengthy article about Søren Kierkegaard in 1920.^{[152][153]} Swenson stated: “It would be interesting to speculate upon the reputation that Kierkegaard might have attained, and the extent of the influence he might have exerted, if he had written in one of the major European languages, instead of in the tongue of one of the smallest countries in the world.”^[154]

4.2.1 German and English translators of Kierkegaard's works

Hermann Gottsche published Kierkegaard's Journals in 1905. It had taken academics 50 years to arrange his journals.^[155] Kierkegaard's main works were translated into German by Christoph Schrempf from 1909 onwards.^[156] Emmanuel Hirsch released a German edition of Kierkegaard's collected works from 1950 onwards.^[156] Both Harald Hoffding's and Schrempf's books about Kierkegaard were reviewed in 1892.^{[157][158]}

In the 1930s, the first academic English translations,^[159] by Alexander Dru, David F. Swenson, Douglas V. Steere, and Walter Lowrie appeared, under the editorial efforts of Oxford University Press editor Charles Williams, one of the members of the Inklings.^{[160][161]} Thomas Henry Croxall, another early translator, Lowrie, and Dru all hoped that people would not just read about Kierkegaard but would actually read his works.^[162] Dru published an English translation of Kierkegaard's Journals in 1958;^[163] Alastair Hannay translated some of Kierkegaard's works.^[164] From the 1960s to the 1990s, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong translated his works more than once.^{[164][165]} The first volume of their first version of the *Journals and Papers* (Indiana, 1967–1978) won the 1968 U.S. National Book Award in category Translation.^{[164][166]} They both dedicated their lives to the study of Søren Kierkegaard and his works, which are maintained at the Howard V. and Edna H. Hong Kierkegaard Library. Jon Stewart (1961–) from the University of Copenhagen has written extensively about Søren Kierkegaard.

4.3 Later 20th century reception

In 1964 Life Magazine traced the history of existentialism from Heraclitus (500BC) and Parmenides over the argument over The Unchanging One as the real and the state of flux as the real. From there to the Old Testament Psalms and then to Jesus and later from Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) to Rene Descartes (1596–1650) and Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) and then on to Nietzsche and Paul Tillich. Dostoevski and Camus are attempts to rewrite Descartes according to their own lights and Descartes is the forefather of Sartre through the fact that they both used a “literary style.” The article goes on to say,

But the orthodox, textbook precursor of modern existentialism was the Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), a lonely, hunchbacked writer who denounced the established church and rejected much of the then-popular German idealism – in which thought and ideas, rather than things perceived through the senses, were held to constitute reality. He built a philosophy based in part on the idea of permanent cleavage between faith and rea-

son. This was an existentialism which still had room for a God whom Sartre later expelled, but which started the great pendulum-swing toward the modern concepts of the absurd. Kierkegaard spent his life thinking existentially and converting remarkably few to his ideas. But when it comes to the absurdity of existence, war is a great convincer; and it was at the end of World War I that two German philosophers, **Karl Jaspers** and **Martin Heidegger**, took up Kierkegaard's ideas, elaborated and systematized them. By the 1930s Kierkegaard's thinking made new impact on French intellectuals who, like Sartre, were nauseated by the static pre-Munich hypocrisy of the European middle class. After World War II, with the human condition more precarious than ever, with humanity facing the mushroom-shaped ultimate absurdity, existentialism and our time came together in **Jean-Paul Sartre**.

- *Existentialism*, Life, November 6, 1964, Volume 57, No. 19 ISSN 0024-3019 Published by Time Inc. P. 102-103, begins on page 86

Kierkegaard's comparatively early and manifold philosophical and theological reception in Germany was one of the decisive factors of expanding his works' influence and readership throughout the world.^{[167][168]} Important for the first phase of his reception in Germany was the establishment of the journal *Zwischen den Zeiten* (*Between the Ages*) in 1922 by a heterogeneous circle of Protestant theologians: **Karl Barth**, **Emil Brunner**, **Rudolf Bultmann** and **Friedrich Gogarten**.^[169] Their thought would soon be referred to as *dialectical theology*.^[169] At roughly the same time, Kierkegaard was discovered by several proponents of the Jewish-Christian philosophy of dialogue in Germany, namely by **Martin Buber**, **Ferdinand Ebner**, and **Franz Rosenzweig**.^[170] In addition to the philosophy of dialogue, existential philosophy has its point of origin in Kierkegaard and his concept of individuality.^[171] **Martin Heidegger** sparsely refers to Kierkegaard in *Being and Time* (1927),^[172] obscuring how much he owes to him.^{[173][174][175]} In 1935, **Karl Jaspers** emphasized Kierkegaard's (and Nietzsche's) continuing importance for modern philosophy.^[176] **Walter Kaufmann** discussed Sartre, Jaspers, and Heidegger in relation to Kierkegaard, and Kierkegaard in relation to the crisis of religion.^[177]

4.3.1 Kierkegaard's Influence on Karl Barth's Early Theology

Kierkegaard's influence on **Karl Barth's** early theology is evident in *The Epistle to the Romans*. The early Barth read at least three volumes of Kierkegaard's works: *Practice in Christianity*, *The Moment*, and an *Anthology* from his journals and diaries. Almost all key terms from

Kierkegaard which had an important role in *The Epistle to the Romans* can be found in *Practice in Christianity*. The concept of the indirect communication, the paradox, and the moment of *Practice in Christianity*, in particular, confirmed and sharpened Barth's ideas on contemporary Christianity and the Christian life.

Wilhelm Pauk wrote in 1931 (*Karl Barth Prophet Of A New Christianity*) that Kierkegaard's use of the Latin phrase *Finitum Non Capax Infiniti* (the finite does not (or cannot) comprehend the infinite) summed up Barth's system.^[178] David G. Kingman and Adolph Keller each discussed Barth's relationship to Kierkegaard in their books, *The Religious Educational Values in Karl Barth's Teachings* (1934) and *Karl Barth and Christian Unity* (1933). Keller notes the splits that happen when a new teaching is introduced and some assume a higher knowledge from a higher source than others. But Kierkegaard always referred to the equality of all in the world of the spirit where there is neither "sport" nor "spook" or anyone who can shut you out of the world of the spirit except yourself. All are chosen by God and equal in His sight. *The Expectancy of Faith*, "Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. *The Bible – NIV* "Galatians 3:23–29; "If a person always keeps his soul sober and alert in this idea, he will never go astray in his outlook on life and people or "combine respect for status of persons with his faith." Show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*James 2.1*) Then he will direct his thoughts toward God, and his eye will not make the mistake of looking for differences in the world instead of likeness with God.^[179]

It was in his study of Paul that he found his first peace of mind. He was fascinated by the revelation of the power of the Holy Spirit when it once touched a man; at the completeness with which it overwhelms and keeps its chosen ones loyal. He conceived of Paul as one upon whom God had laid His hand' Barth writes: "The man Paul evidently sees and hears something which is above everything, which is absolutely beyond the range of my observation and measure of my thought." Following this observation Barth too became a "listener" and in that moment was born the "Theology of Crisis." Besides affecting Barth deeply, the philosophy of Kierkegaard has found voice in the works of Ibsen, Unamuno, and Heidegger, and its sphere of influence seems to be growing in ever

widening circles. The principle contribution of Kierkegaard to Barth is the dualism of time and eternity which Kierkegaard phrases: “The infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity.”^[180]

Wherever Kierkegaard is understood, opposition is aroused to organized ecclesiasticism, to the objective treatment of religious questions, to the sovereignty of man, whether it be called idealism or theology of mystical experience. In this Kierkegaard circle of young pastors and pupils of Geismar there arose not only resistance against the teacher himself, whom they accused of failing to present Kierkegaard’s ideas as sufficiently radical, but also against the prevalent work of the church as such. The work with the youth, the work with Home Missions appears as superficial church business. In *Grundtvigianism* they frequently saw secularized piety, which had gone over to a concern with all sorts of cultural possessions. The majesty of God seemed to have been preserved too little and the institution of the church seemed to have taken over the meaning of the existential meeting with the transcendent God. In this opposition to the prevalent church life the thoughts of Kierkegaard have certainly remained alive. However, they became effective only when their reinforced echo from foreign lands reached Denmark. This effect was more marked when Barthianism became known. Into this group of dissatisfied, excited radicals Barthian thought penetrated with full force. The inward distress, the tension and the preparation of Kierkegaard made them receptive to the new. A magazine entitled the *Tidenverv* (*The Turn of the Times*), has been their journal since 1926. Especially the Student Christian Movement became the port of invasion for the new thought. But this invasion it has been split completely into two camps which vehemently attack each other. Indictment was launched against the old theology. The quiet work of the church was scorned as secularization of the message or as emotional smugness, which had found a place in Home Missions despite all its call to repentance.^[181]

Kierkegaard and the early Barth think that in Christianity, direct communication is impossible because Christ appears incognito. For them Christ is a paradox, and therefore one can know him only in indirect communication. They are fully aware of the importance of the moment when the human being stands before God, and is moved by him alone from time to eternity, from the earth to which (s)he belongs to the heaven where God exists. But Kierkegaard stressed the single individual in the presence of God in time in his early discourses and wrote

against speculative arguments about whether or not one individual, no matter how gifted, can ascertain where another stood in relation to God as early as his *Two Upbuilding Discourses of 1843* where he wrote against listening to speculative Christians:

The expectation of faith is then victory, and this expectation cannot be disappointed unless a man disappoints himself by depriving himself of expectation; like the one who foolishly supposed that he had lost faith, or foolishly supposed that some individual had taken it from him; or like the one who sought to delude himself with the idea that there was some special power which could deprive a man of his faith; who found satisfaction in the vain thought that this was precisely what had happened to him, found joy in frightening others with the assurance that some such power did exist that made sport of the noblest in man, and empowered the one who was thus tested to ridicule others. Søren Kierkegaard, *Two Edifying Discourses 1843*, Swenson trans., 1943 p. 30

Barth endorses the main theme from Kierkegaard but also reorganizes the scheme and transforms the details. Barth expands the theory of indirect communication to the field of Christian ethics; he applies the concept of unrecognizability to the Christian life. He coins the concept of the “paradox of faith” since the form of faith entails a contradictory encounter of God and human beings. He also portrayed the contemporaneity of the moment when in crisis a human being desperately perceives the contemporaneity of Christ. In regard to the concept of indirect communication, the paradox, and the moment, the Kierkegaard of the early Barth is a productive catalyst.^[182]

5 Philosophy and theology

Main article: *Philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard*

Kierkegaard has been called a philosopher, a theologian,^[183] the Father of *Existentialism*, both *atheistic* and *theistic* variations,^[184] a literary critic,^[96] a social theorist,^[185] a humorist,^[186] a psychologist,^[8] and a poet.^[187] Two of his influential ideas are “subjectivity”,^[188] and the notion popularly referred to as “leap of faith”.^[160] However, the Danish equivalent to the English phrase “leap of faith” does not appear in the original Danish nor is the English phrase found in current English translations of Kierkegaard’s works. Kierkegaard does mention the concepts of “faith” and “leap” together many times in his works.^[189]

The *leap of faith* is his conception of how an individual would believe in God or how a person would act in love. Faith is not a decision based on evidence that, say, certain



Kierkegaard's manuscript of *Philosophical Fragments*.^[106]

beliefs about God are true or a certain person is worthy of love. No such evidence could ever be enough to completely justify the kind of total commitment involved in true religious faith or romantic love. Faith involves making that commitment anyway. Kierkegaard thought that to have faith is at the same time to have doubt. So, for example, for one to truly have faith in God, one would also have to doubt one's beliefs about God; the doubt is the rational part of a person's thought involved in weighing evidence, without which the faith would have no real substance. Someone who does not realize that Christian doctrine is inherently doubtful and that there can be no objective certainty about its truth does not have faith but is merely credulous. For example, it takes no faith to believe that a pencil or a table exists, when one is looking at it and touching it. In the same way, to believe or have faith in God is to know that one has no perceptual or any other access to God, and yet still has faith in God.^[190] Kierkegaard writes, "doubt is conquered by faith, just as it is faith which has brought doubt into the world".^{[191][192]}

Kierkegaard also stresses the importance of the self, and the self's relation to the world, as being grounded in self-reflection and introspection. He argued in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* that "subjectivity is truth" and "truth is subjectivity." This has to do with a distinction between what is objectively true and an individual's subjective relation (such as indifference or commitment) to that truth. People who in *some sense* believe the same things may relate to those beliefs quite differently. Two individuals may both believe that many of those around them are poor and deserve help, but this knowledge may lead only one of them to decide to actually help the poor.^[193] This is how Kierkegaard put it: "What a priceless invention statistics are, what a glorious fruit of culture, what a characteristic counterpart to the *de te narratur fabula* [the tale is told to you] of antiquity. Schleiermacher so enthusiastically declares that knowledge does not perturb religiousness, and that the religious person does not sit safeguarded by a lightning rod and scoff at God; yet with the help of statistical tables one laughs at all of life."^{[194][195]} In other words Kierkegaard says: "Who has the more difficult task: the teacher who

lectures on earnest things a meteor's distance from everyday life -- or the learner who should put it to use?"^[196]

Kierkegaard primarily discusses subjectivity with regard to religious matters. As already noted, he argues that doubt is an element of faith and that it is impossible to gain any objective certainty about religious doctrines such as the existence of God or the life of Christ. The most one could hope for would be the conclusion that it is probable that the Christian doctrines are true, but if a person were to believe such doctrines only to the degree they seemed *likely* to be true, he or she would not be genuinely religious at all. Faith consists in a subjective relation of absolute commitment to these doctrines.^[197]

5.1 Philosophical criticism

Kierkegaard's famous philosophical 20th century critics include Theodor Adorno and Emmanuel Levinas. Non-religious philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger supported many aspects of Kierkegaard's philosophical views, but rejected some of his religious views.^{[198][199]} One critic wrote that Adorno's book *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* is "the most irresponsible book ever written on Kierkegaard"^[200] because Adorno takes Kierkegaard's pseudonyms literally, and constructs a philosophy which makes him seem incoherent and unintelligible. Another reviewer says that "Adorno is [far away] from the more credible translations and interpretations of the Collected Works of Kierkegaard we have today."^[85]

Levinas' main attack on Kierkegaard focused on his ethical and religious stages, especially in *Fear and Trembling*. Levinas criticises the leap of faith by saying this suspension of the ethical and leap into the religious is a type of violence. He states: "Kierkegaardian violence begins when existence is forced to abandon the ethical stage in order to embark on the religious stage, the domain of belief. But belief no longer sought external justification. Even internally, it combined communication and isolation, and hence violence and passion. That is the origin of the relegation of ethical phenomena to secondary status and the contempt of the ethical foundation of being which has led, through Nietzsche, to the amorality of recent philosophies."^[201]

Levinas pointed to the Judeo-Christian belief that it was God who first commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and that an angel commanded Abraham to stop. If Abraham were truly in the religious realm, he would not have listened to the angel's command and should have continued to kill Isaac. To Levinas, "transcending ethics" seems like a loophole to excuse would-be murderers from their crime and thus is unacceptable.^[202] One interesting consequence of Levinas' critique is that it seemed to reveal that Levinas viewed God as a projection of inner ethical desire rather than an absolute moral agent.^[203] However, one of Kierkegaard's central points in *Fear and*

Trembling was that the religious sphere *entails* the ethical sphere; Abraham had faith that God is always in one way or another ethically in the right, even when He commands someone to kill. Therefore, deep down, Abraham had faith that God, as an absolute moral authority, would never allow him in the end to do something as ethically heinous as murdering his own child, and so he passed the test of blind obedience versus moral choice.

Sartre objected to the *existence of God*: If existence precedes essence, it follows from the meaning of the term sentient that a sentient being cannot be complete or perfect. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre's phrasing is that God would be a *pour-soi* (a being-for-itself; a consciousness) who is also an *en-soi* (a being-in-itself; a thing) which is a contradiction in terms.^{[198][204]} Critics of Sartre rebutted this objection by stating that it rests on a false dichotomy and a misunderstanding of the traditional Christian view of God.^[205]

Sartre agreed with Kierkegaard's analysis of Abraham undergoing anxiety (Sartre calls it anguish), but claimed that God told Abraham to do it. In his lecture, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre wondered whether Abraham ought to have doubted whether God actually spoke to him.^[198] In Kierkegaard's view, Abraham's certainty had its origin in that 'inner voice' which cannot be demonstrated or shown to another ("The problem comes as soon as Abraham wants to be understood").^[206] To Kierkegaard, every external "proof" or justification is merely on the outside and external to the subject.^[207] Kierkegaard's proof for the immortality of the soul, for example, is rooted in the extent to which one wishes to live forever.^[208]

Faith was something that Kierkegaard often wrestled with throughout his writing career; under both his real name and behind pseudonyms, he explored many different aspects of faith. These various aspects include faith as a spiritual goal, the historical orientation of faith (particularly toward Jesus Christ), faith being a gift from God, faith as dependency on a historical object, faith as a passion, and faith as a resolution to personal despair. Even so, it has been argued that Kierkegaard never offers a full, explicit and systematic account of what faith is.^[51] *Either/Or* was published 20 February 1843; it was mostly written during Kierkegaard's stay in Berlin, where he took notes on Schelling's *Philosophy of Revelation*. According to the *Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Religion*, *Either/Or* (vol. 1) consists of essays of literary and music criticism, a set of romantic-like-aphorisms, a whimsical essay on how to avoid boredom, a panegyric on the unhappiest possible human being, a diary recounting a supposed seduction, and (vol. II) two enormous didactic and hortatory ethical letters and a sermon.^{[53][54]} This opinion is a reminder of the type of controversy Kierkegaard tried to encourage in many of his writings both for readers in his own generation and for subsequent generations as well.

6 Influence

Main article: [Influence and reception of Søren Kierkegaard](#)

Many 20th-century philosophers, both theistic and athe-



The Søren Kierkegaard Statue in the Royal Library Garden in Copenhagen

istic, and theologians drew concepts from Kierkegaard, including the notions of angst, despair, and the importance of the individual. His fame as a philosopher grew tremendously in the 1930s, in large part because the ascendant existentialist movement pointed to him as a precursor, although later writers celebrated him as a highly significant and influential thinker in his own right.^[209] Since Kierkegaard was raised as a Lutheran,^[210] he was commemorated as a teacher in the *Calendar of Saints* of the Lutheran Church on 11 November and in the *Calendar of Saints* of the Episcopal Church with a *feast day* on 8 September.

Philosophers and theologians influenced by Kierkegaard are numerous and include major twentieth century theologians and philosophers.^[211] Paul Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism in the philosophy of science was inspired by Kierkegaard's idea of subjectivity as truth. Ludwig Wittgenstein was immensely influenced and humbled by Kierkegaard,^[212] claiming that "Kierkegaard is far too deep for me, anyhow. He bewilders me without working the good effects which he would in deeper souls".^[212] Karl Popper referred to Kierkegaard as "the great reformer of Christian ethics, who exposed the official Christian moral-

ity of his day as anti-Christian and anti-humanitarian hypocrisy".^{[213][214][215][216][217]} Hilary Putnam admires Kierkegaard, "for his insistence on the priority of the question, 'How should I live?'".^[218]

Kierkegaard has also had a considerable influence on 20th-century literature. Figures deeply influenced by his work include W. H. Auden, Jorge Luis Borges, Don DeLillo, Hermann Hesse, Franz Kafka,^[219] David Lodge, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Rainer Maria Rilke, J.D. Salinger and John Updike.^[220] George Henry Price wrote in his 1963 book *The Narrow Pass* regarding the "who" and the "what" of Kierkegaard still seems to hold true today stating: "Kierkegaard was the sanest man of his generation....Kierkegaard was a schizophrenic....Kierkegaard was the greatest Dane....the difficult Dane....the gloomy Dane...Kierkegaard was the greatest Christian of the century....Kierkegaard's aim was the destruction of the historic Christian faith....He did not attack philosophy as such....He negated reason....He was a voluntarist....Kierkegaard was the Knight of Faith....Kierkegaard never found faith....Kierkegaard possessed the truth....Kierkegaard was one of the damned."^[221]

Kierkegaard had a profound influence on psychology. He is widely regarded as the founder of Christian psychology and of existential psychology and therapy.^[8] Existentialist (often called "humanistic") psychologists and therapists include Ludwig Binswanger, Viktor Frankl, Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May. May based his *The Meaning of Anxiety* on Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Anxiety*. Kierkegaard's sociological work *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age* critiques modernity.^[96] Ernest Becker based his 1974 Pulitzer Prize book, *The Denial of Death*, on the writings of Kierkegaard, Freud and Otto Rank. Kierkegaard is also seen as an important precursor of postmodernism.^[215] In popular culture, he was the subject of serious television and radio programmes; in 1984, a six-part documentary *Sea of Faith: Television series* presented by Don Cupitt featured an episode on Kierkegaard, while on Maundy Thursday in 2008, Kierkegaard was the subject of discussion of the BBC Radio 4 programme presented by Melvyn Bragg, *In Our Time*. Google honoured him with a Google Doodle on his 200th anniversary.^[222]

Kierkegaard is considered by some modern theologians to be the "Father of Existentialism."^[223] Because of his influence and in spite of it, others only consider either Martin Heidegger or Jean-Paul Sartre to be the actual "Father of Existentialism."^{[224][225]} Kierkegaard predicted his posthumous fame, and foresaw that his work would become the subject of intense study and research.^[226] In 1784 Immanuel Kant, many years before Kierkegaard, challenged the thinkers of Europe to think for themselves in a manner suggestive of Kierkegaard's philosophy in the nineteenth century.^[227] In 1851 Arthur Schopenhauer said the same as Kierkegaard had said about the lack of realism in the reading public in *Either/Or*

Part I and *Prefaces*.^{[228][229]} In 1854 Søren Kierkegaard wrote a note to "My Reader" of a similar nature.^[230]

7 Selected bibliography

For a complete bibliography, see Søren Kierkegaard bibliography.

See also: List of works about Søren Kierkegaard

- (1841) *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (*Om Begrebet Ironi med stadigt Hensyn til Socrates*)
- (1843) *Either/Or* (*Enten-Eller*)
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- (1843) *Fear and Trembling* (*Frygt og Bæven*)
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- (1844) *Four Upbuilding Discourses, 1844* (*Fire opbyggelige Taler*)
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- (1845) *Stages on Life's Way* (*Stadier paa Livets Vei*)
- (1846) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (*Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*)
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- (1847) *Works of Love* (*Kjerlighedens Gjerninger*)
- (1848) *Christian Discourses* (*Christelige Taler*)
- (1848, published 1859) *The Point of View of My Work as an Author* "as good as finished" (IX A 293) (*Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed. En ligefrem Meddelelse, Rapport til Historien*)

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8 Notes

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- [2] Gardiner 1969
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- [4] See Book Twelve of *Goethe's Autobiography*
- [5] *Point of View* by Lowrie, p. 41, *Practice in Christianity*, Hong trans., 1991, Chapter VI, p. 233ff, *Works of Love IIIA*, p. 91ff
- [6] Duncan 1976
- [7] Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, Hong trans., pp. 15–17, 555–610 *Either/Or* Vol II, pp. 14, 58, 216–217, 250 Hong
- [8] Ostenfeld & McKinnon 1972
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- [10] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Hong trans., 1992, p. 131
- [11] Philosophical Fragments and Concluding Postscript both deal with objectively demonstrated Christianity. It can't be done per SK.
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- [15] *Glimpses and Impressions of Kierkegaard*, Thomas Henry Croxall, James Nisbet & Co 1959 p. 51 The quote came from *Henriette Lund's Recollections of Søren Kierkegaard* written in 1876 and published in 1909 Søren was her uncle. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001396450>
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- [25] Garff 2005
- [26] Papers VI B 13 n.d 14-145, Søren Kierkegaard Works of Love, Hong p. 380 (1848)
- [27] Caesar did many an illustrious deed, but even if nothing were preserved but one single statement he is supposed to have made, I would admire him. After Cato committed suicide, Caesar is supposed to have said, “There Cato wrested from me my most beautiful victory, for I would have forgiven him.” *Stages on Life's Way*, Hong p. 384, 481-485
- [28] Edna Hong, *Forgiveness is a Work as Well as a Grace*, 1984 Augsburg Publishing House p. 58
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- [34] Garff 2005, p. 113 Also available in *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life As Seen by His Contemporaries*, p. 225.
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- [37] *Journals & Papers of Søren Kierkegaard* IIA 11 August 1838
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- [39] Given the importance of the journals, references in the form of (*Journals, XYZ*) are referenced from Dru's 1938 *Journals*. When known, the exact date is given; otherwise, month and year, or just year is given.

- [40] Dru 1938
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- [42] *Concluding Postscript*, Hong trans., p. 247
- [43] (Søren Kierkegaard's Journals & Papers IA Gilleleie, 1 August 1835)
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- [45] *Journals & Papers of Søren Kierkegaard IIA 11 August 1838*
- [46] Hannay 2003
- [47] See *Stages on Life's Way*, Hong trans., p. 195ff and 423ff Here he wrote about his conflict with his own guilt. *Stages*, p. 380-382 Am I guilty, then? Yes. How? By my having begun what I could not carry out. How do you understand it now? Now I understand more clearly why it was impossible for me. What then is my guilt? That I did not understand it sooner. What is your responsibility? Every possible consequence of her life. Why every possible one, for this certainly seems to be exaggeration? Because here it is not a matter of an event but of an act and an ethical responsibility, the consequence of which I do not dare to arm against by being courageous, for courage in this case means opening oneself to them. What can serve as your excuse? ...
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- [54] Kierkegaard's notes on Schelling's work are included in Hong's 1989 translation of the Concept of Irony
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- [57] *Either/Or Part I*, Swenson trans., p. 69-73, 143ff, *Either/Or Part II*, Hong trans., 30-36, 43-48
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- [60] *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, Søren Kierkegaard 1843-1844, 1990 by Howard V. Hong, Princeton University Press, p. 5
- [61] *Fear and Trembling*, Hong trans., 1983, Translator's introduction, p. xiv
- [62] *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, p. 59-60
- [63] Søren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, p. 122-123, *Concluding Postscript*, pp. 322-323, 242, *Works of Love*, Hong trans., p. 13.
- [64] *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, Hong trans., p. 295
- [65] Søren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, Hong trans., pp. 363-368.
- [66] *The Concept of Anxiety*, p. 7, 20 and *Either/Or Part II*, Hong trans., p. 342
- [67] *Either/Or Part II*, Hong trans., p. 31
- [68] *Fear and Trembling*, pp. 121-123.
- [69] *Either/Or Part II*, Hong trans., pp. 170-176, *The Concept of Anxiety*, p. 11-13 including note,
- [70] *Johannes Climacus* by Søren Kierkegaard, Edited and Introduced by Jane Chamberlain, Translated by T. H. Croxall 2001 pp. 80-81, *Either/Or II*, pp. 55-57, Repetition, pp. 202-203.
- [71] *The Concept of Anxiety*, pp. 9-13, 20-24.
- [72] Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Hong trans., pp. 301, 160-161.
- [73] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Hong trans., 1992, p. 243
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- [75] *Stages on Life's Way*, Hong trans., p. 398
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- [77] *Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, 1 June 1851.
- [78] Søren Kierkegaard, *Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life*, (1845), Swenson trans., pp. 69-70.
- [79] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, p. 465.
- [80] *The Point of View of My Work as An Author*: Lowrie, pp. 142-143)
- [81] See also *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Volume I by Johannes Climacus, edited by Søren Kierkegaard, 1846 - Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, 1992, Princeton University Press, pp. 251-300 for more on the Pseudonymous authorship.
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- [85] Morgan 2003
- [86] Evans 1996
- [87] (*POV* by Lowrie, pp. 133–134)
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- [179] *Two Upbuilding Discourses, 1843* and *Four Upbuilding Discourses, 1843* – Søren Kierkegaard *Four Upbuilding Discourses*, p. 335 and *Philosophical Fragments*, Swenson trans., p. 47-50
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- [183] Kangas 1998
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- [188] Kierkegaard is not an extreme subjectivist; he would not reject the importance of objective truths.
- [189] See *Faith and the Kierkegaardian Leap* in *Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*.
- [190] Kierkegaard 1992, pp. 21–57
- [191] Kierkegaard 1976, p. 399
- [192] Elsewhere, Kierkegaard uses the Faith/Offense dichotomy. In this dichotomy, doubt is the middle ground between faith and taking offense. Offense, in his terminology, describes the threat faith poses to the rational mind. He uses Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:6: “*And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*”. In *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard writes: “Just as the concept of “faith” is an altogether distinctively Christian term, so in turn is “offense” an altogether distinctively Christian term relating to faith. The possibility of offense is the crossroad, or it is like standing at the crossroad. From the possibility of offense, one turns either to offense or to faith, **but one never comes to faith except from the possibility of offense**” (p. 80). In the footnote, he writes, “in the works of some pseudonymous writers it has been pointed out that in modern philosophy there is a confused discussion of doubt where the discussion should have been about despair. Therefore one has been unable to control or govern doubt either in scholarship or in life. “Despair,” however, promptly points in the right direction by placing the relation under the rubric of personality (the single individual) and the ethical. But just as there is a confused discussion of “doubt” instead of a discussion of “despair”, So also the practice has been to use the category “doubt” where the discussion ought to be about “offense.” **The relation, the relation of personality to Christianity, is not to doubt or to believe, but to be offended or to believe.** All modern philosophy, both ethically, and Christianly, is based upon frivolousness. Instead of deterring and calling people to order by speaking of being despairing and being offended, it has waved to them and invited them to become conceited by doubting and having doubted. Modern philosophy, being abstract, is floating in metaphysical indeterminateness. Instead of explaining this about itself and then directing people (individual persons) to the ethical, the religious, the existential, philosophy has given the appearance that people are able to speculate themselves out of their own skin, as they so very prosaically say, into pure appearance.” (*Practice in Christianity*, trans. Hong, 1991, p. 80.) He writes that the person is either offended that Christ came as a man, and that God is too high to be a lowly man who is actually capable of doing very little to resist. Or Jesus, a man, thought himself too high to consider himself God (blasphemy). Or the historical offense where God a lowly man comes into collision with an established order. Thus, this offensive paradox is highly resistant to rational thought.
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- Dr. Michael Healy: Time and Oughtness in Kierkegaard on YouTube

- Wabash Center Internet Guide: Søren Kierkegaard
- Internet Resources about Kierkegaard from David Bishop
- Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter edited by Gordon D. Marino
- Guardian series on Kierkegaard by Liverpool University philosopher Clare Carlisle
- <http://www.kierkegaard.de> – [German] web site about Søren Kierkegaard
- Søren Kierkegaard's Collected Works Online
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10 External links

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